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	INL-00	DNI-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	WHA-00	PERC-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VCI-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	MOFM-00
	MOF-00	M-00	CDC-00	VCIE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIG-00
	OMB-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00	P-00	SCT-00	D-00
	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STPD-00
	NCTC-00	CBP-00	R-00	EPAE-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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 DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
 FBI WASHINGTON DC

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 TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [ASEC](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#) [UK](#)  
 SUBJECT: MINISTRY OF INTERIOR BOMB DETECTOR STIRS  
 CONTROVERSY AND CHARGES OF CORRUPTION

Classified By: ACCO Joseph Stafford, reason 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The disclosure in January of the arrest of a UK businessman who allegedly sold useless bomb detectors to Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) posed new questions about the GOI's ability to ensure the public welfare, particularly as the equipment was being used at government facilities that witnessed massive bomb attacks in August, October, and December. Iraqi official opinion on the utility of the device remains divided, while key oversight authorities, including the Inspector General at the Ministry of Interior (where the equipment was purchased), are pointing to irregularities. We are told that, in addition to investigations by the Commission of Integrity (COI), the Ministry of Interior IG, and the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister has instructed his anti-corruption advisor, Dr. Adel Mohsen, himself subject to past allegations of corruption, to conduct an inquiry. The device continues to be used by Iraqi Army and police at some checkpoints across Baghdad and other parts of Iraq. More broadly, the case highlights all too well the challenge of ensuring transparent public procurement in Iraq. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On January 23, the British media announced the arrest the previous day of Jim McCormick, managing director of ATSC Ltd., of Somerset County, England. McCormick was arrested for possible fraud in the sale of bomb detectors sold, inter alia, to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior for police who use them at checkpoints to scan for explosives. The British Government announced it would seek a ban on exports to countries where British troops were deployed, because continued use of the flawed device could jeopardize the lives of UK soldiers. The New York Times first reported questions about the device in November 2009, citing American military officials and technical experts who said the ADE 651 was useless, despite widespread use by Iraqi security forces. (COMMENT: USG sources advised the GOI against purchase in ¶2009. END COMMENT.)

¶3. (C) The ADE 651 is a hand-held wand with no batteries or internal electronic components, which Iraqi officials -- and the seller -- had claimed was powered by the static electricity of the user. The only moving part is what looks like a radio antenna on a swivel, which is supposed to swing (like a divining rod) to indicate the presence of weapons or explosives. Embassy armored motorcades transiting from the international zone have been routinely scanned by the device, which often fails to detect ammunition inside the vehicles. According to a New York Times piece on January 24, an

associate of ATSC, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the devices were manufactured for USD 250 each by suppliers in Britain and Romania. This individual claimed that "everyone at ATSC knew there was nothing inside the ADE 651." BBC carried statements from computer experts that the chip in the device could not possibly detect any chemicals or explosives. The Times piece indicated that Iraqi government auditors were reporting that the GOI paid USD 40,000-60,000 for each device, and had determined that ATSC was marketing the device for USD 16,000. The balance was said by Iraqi officials to have been for training, spare parts and commissions. The UK's Guardian newspaper reported last November that MOI in 2008 had initially purchased 800 ADE 651's for USD 32 million (USD 40,000 apiece), and had on order a second shipment worth USD 53 million. USF-I Deputy Commanding General for Assistance and Training (DCG A&T), through its International Training and Assistance Mission (ITAM), maintains advisors at the Ministry of Interior; the U.S. advisors had heard MOI paid of up to USD 65 million, but had not seen records to confirm this.

#### Reaction in Iraq

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¶4. (SBU) In the wake of Janaury's press reports, Iraqi officials said publicly they would begin an investigation. According to press reports, the British Embassy in Iraq has offered to cooperate with any Iraqi government investigation. Ammar Tuma, an MP in the Iraqi parliament's Security and Defense Committee, told the Times that the Iraqi government had "wasted millions of dollars and lives." Similar reactions by Iraqi citizens were carried on other Iraqi media, highlighting how the bomb wands had failed to stop explosions at key ministries in recent months.

¶5. (SBU) On January 24, London-based Al-Sharq al-Awsat reported that Iraq's Assistant Deputy Minister of Interior, MG Tariq al-Asel, said he examined the devices and declared them "100% accurate." Asel said the UK manufacturer was arrested because "British and Americans tried to discover proprietary information on the wands, which the manufacturer had opposed." As of early February, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) was still using the devices.

¶6. (SBU) Notwithstanding claims by senior MOI officials, on January 23, an Iraqi TV station interviewed Aqeel Al-Turaihi, the Inspector General (IG) of the MOI, in which he indicated there had been some corrupt practices in the procurement. He said his investigative report had been referred to the Minister of Interior, who ordered further inquiries and audits. Turaihi hinted in the interview that Iraq lost "millions of dollars" in purchasing the devices, portraying them as worthless and citing their failure to detect explosives in tests. Turaihi reiterated these points in a meeting with ACCO and DCG A&T ITAM on February 10. He noted the procurement had been initiated by the Directorate General of Counter-Explosives at the MOI. (NOTE: The head of the directorate, Major General Jihad al-Jabiri, rebuffed New York Times reporters covering the story. We are told that Jabiri is back at work after spending time recently in Jordan. END NOTE.)

¶7. (C) Turaihi also told ACCO and ITAM MOI that investigations had been opened by the Commission on Integrity (COI), the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA), the Prime Minister's office, and the Council of Representatives. Turaihi said that although the MOI had also assisted in the procurement of the wands for other ministries, he was investigating only MOI bomb wand purchases. No one had been charged in the case yet, he added, but charges would likely be forthcoming as the investigation proceeded. Asked point-blank whether he believed that government officials were guilty of corruption in procuring the devices, he replied "yes, and at the upper levels." Turaihi expressed concern that the case could be "politicized" with possibly no meaningful follow-up until after elections.

¶8. (C) ACCO staff also met with the Prime Minister's anti-corruption advisor, Dr. Adel Mohsen, who also serves as the Health Ministry IG. Mohsen confirmed that pursuant to the Prime Minister's instruction, he was leading an investigation into the wand acquisition. He indicated that the investigation would be completed soon, and gave his personal view that the device was worthless and that there was corruption in the procurement process. Asked about implication of GOI officials in the corruption, Mohsen declined to give specifics but, consistent with MOI Turaihi's comments, implied that senior Interior Ministry officials were involved. (COMMENT: Mohsen himself has been the subject of credible corruption allegations in the past, e.g., in connection with the Health Ministry's procurement of pharmaceuticals. END COMMENT.)

¶9. (C) In late January, ACCO received a classified Iraqi document from the COI (please protect), which indicates the Prime Minister's office is also investigating wand purchases by the Ministry of Minerals and Industry (MIM). Inspector General of MIM, Salem Polis, told ACCO on February 9 that he was uncertain about the wand's utility but denied any wrongdoing by MIM officials in acquiring the devices, asserting that allegations were being made by opponents to embarrass the government. He confirmed that the wands continued to be used by police at MIM facilities.

Comment

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¶10. (C) With campaigning for the March 7 parliamentary elections scheduled to kick off February 12, it remains to be seen whether opposition candidates, in particular, seize on the scandal over the evidently bogus wands in an effort to score points against the GOI. There is the prospect of negative fallout on the election bid of Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani, in particular, given his Ministry's leading role in acquiring the devices. The suggestion by both the MOI and MOH Inspectors General of corruption in the acquisition of the wands underscores the pressing need for greater transparency and oversight of the GOI's procurement process. End Comment.

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